

**The Claims**

1. (Original) A method, implemented by a computing device, the method comprising:

sending a service request to a device, wherein the service request is a request for data relating to the operation of the device; and

determining, based at least in part on an amount of time taken to service the device, whether the computing device is to be identified as typically servicing the device.

2. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the determining comprises:

checking whether the amount of time taken to service the device is less than a decision threshold; and

if the amount of time taken is less than the decision threshold, then determining that the computing device is to be identified as typically servicing the device.

3. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method comprising:

checking an amount of time taken by a manager device to service another device; and

determining, based at least in part on the amount of time, whether the manager device is a desired manager of the other device.

4. (Original) A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the determining comprises:

checking whether the amount of time is less than a decision threshold; and  
if the amount of time is less than the decision threshold, then determining that the manager device is the desired manager of the other device.

5. (Original) A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the manager device was not, when servicing the other device, the desired manager of the other device.

6. (Original) A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the method is implemented by the manager device.

7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the method is implemented by a central database.

8. (Original) One or more computer readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a device manager, causes the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

identifying a device to be serviced;  
checking whether the device manager is a desired manager for the device;  
if the device manager is the desired manager for the device, then servicing the device; and

if the device manager is not the desired manager for the device, then checking whether a trigger condition is satisfied and servicing the device if the trigger condition is satisfied.

9. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein identifying the device to be serviced comprises selecting the device from a table accessible to the device manager.

10. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein identifying the device to be serviced comprises receiving an indication of the device from a central database.

11. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising updating a last service time for the device.

12. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein if the device manager is not the desired manager for the device and if the trigger condition is satisfied, then the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

checking whether a time taken by the device manager to service the device is less than a decision threshold; and

if the time taken is less than the decision threshold, then identifying the device manager as the desired manager for the device.

13. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 12, wherein identifying the device manager as the desired manager for the device comprises identifying the device manager in a table entry corresponding to the device.

14. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 12, wherein the decision threshold is equal to the amount of time taken by the last desired manager of the device to service the device.

15. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 12, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

checking, for a plurality of device managers, a frequency with which the trigger condition is satisfied and results in a device manager being identified as a desired manager for a device;

checking whether the frequency exceeds a threshold amount; and

increasing a probability that the trigger condition will be satisfied if the frequency exceeds the threshold amount.

16. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 12, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

checking, for a plurality of device managers, a frequency with which the trigger condition is satisfied and results in a device manager being identified as a desired manager for a device;

checking whether the frequency is below a particular amount; and

reducing a probability that the trigger condition will be satisfied if the frequency exceeds the threshold amount.

17. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein checking whether the device manager is a desired manager for the device comprises checking whether the device manager is identified in a table entry corresponding to the device.

18. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein checking whether the trigger condition is satisfied comprises:

generating a value;

determining whether the value is within a range of trigger values; and

determining that the trigger condition is satisfied if the value is within the range of trigger values.

19. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein checking whether the trigger condition is satisfied comprises:

generating a random value;

determining whether the random value is less than a particular value; and

determining that the trigger condition is satisfied if the random value is less than the particular value.

20. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising altering the trigger condition over time.

21. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 8, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising servicing the device only if the device is due for service.

22. (Original) One or more computer readable media having stored thereon a plurality of instructions that, when executed by one or more processors of a computing device, causes the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

receiving, from a device manager, a request for an identification of one or more devices to be serviced by the device manager;

identifying, to the device manager, one or more devices for which the device manager is the desired manager;

for a plurality of additional devices for which the device manager is not the desired manager, checking whether a trigger condition is satisfied; and

for each device for which the device manager is not the desired manager and for which the trigger condition is satisfied, identifying the device to the device manager.

23. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

receiving, from the device manager, an indication that at least one of the identified devices has been serviced; and

updating a last service time for each of the identified devices.

24. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

receiving, from the device manager, an indication of an amount of time taken by the device manager to service one of the identified devices;

checking whether the amount of time taken by the device manager to service the device is less than a decision threshold; and

if the amount of time taken is less than the decision threshold, then identifying the device manager as the desired manager for the device.

25. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 24, wherein identifying the device manager as the desired manager for the device comprises identifying the device manager in an entry of a device service table, wherein the entry corresponds to the device.

26. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 24, wherein the decision threshold is equal to the amount of time taken by the desired manager of the device to service the device.

27. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 24, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

checking, for a plurality of device managers, a frequency with which the trigger condition is satisfied and results in a device manager being identified as a desired manager for a device;

checking whether the frequency exceeds a threshold amount; and

increasing a probability that the trigger condition will be satisfied if the frequency exceeds the threshold amount.

28. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 24, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising:

checking, for a plurality of device managers, a frequency with which the trigger condition is satisfied and results in a device manager being identified as a desired manager for a device;

checking whether the frequency is below a particular amount; and

reducing a probability that the trigger condition will be satisfied if the frequency exceeds the threshold amount.

29. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein checking whether the trigger condition is satisfied comprises:

generating a value;

determining whether the value is within a range of trigger values; and

determining that the trigger condition is satisfied if the value is within the range of trigger values.

30. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein checking whether the trigger condition is satisfied comprises:

generating a random value;

determining whether the random value is less than a particular value;

determining that the trigger condition is satisfied if the random value is less than the particular value.

31. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising altering the trigger condition over time.

32. (Original) One or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein the plurality of instructions further cause the one or more processors to perform acts comprising identifying only devices that are due for service to the device manager.

33. (Currently amended) A system comprising:  
a device service table to store mappings of desired managers to managed devices; and  
a hardware selection module coupled to access the device service table and configured to,  
check an amount of time taken by a manager device to service another device, and  
determine, based at least in part on the amount of time, whether the manager device is a desired manager of the other device.

34. (Original) A system as recited in claim 33, wherein the selection module is configured to determine whether the manager device is a desired manager of the other device by:  
checking whether the amount of time is less than a decision threshold; and

if the amount of time is less than the decision threshold, then determining that the manager device is the desired manager of the other device.